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Issue 403 | October 30

Sandbox Update: Utah and Arizona Make Changes, Celebrate Milestones

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Four years into its regulatory sandbox program, Utah is adding new regulations to serve consumers better. The [Utah Supreme Court](#) decreed that new sandbox applications must demonstrate how they will reach underserved consumers. Additionally, large companies serving a small number of customers will no longer qualify for the program, and neither will for-profit companies that deal in immigration. These changes are in response to criticisms that the program needed more transparency and a clearer focus on overall legal service reform. Meanwhile, Arizona marked a major milestone by approving its 100th participating entity in its alternative business structure program. [IAALS](#) examines the successes of Arizona's program so far, and how it could be a model for programs across the country.

California Allows Bar Exam to Be Taken from Anywhere

A new proposal will allow California Bar Exam takers to sit for the test from out of state, or even out of the country. To reduce the risk of cheating, those applicants will be required to take the test simultaneously as those in California. In a presentation to the State Bar of California's Committee of Bar Examiners, state bar staff said that in 2023 at least 20% of bar exam applicants were from out of state, and in July 2024, 25% of test takers traveled at least 250 miles to a testing site. This proposal follows other cost-saving measures to the bar exam process, including moving away from large testing sites and the state [developing its own exam](#). State bar officials told [Reuters](#) that they expect the proposal to be approved by the Supreme Court in time for a February launch.

Law School is Cool Again

Law schools are seeing a spike in interest during this admissions cycle. The Law School Admission Council is reporting a 26% rise in applicants, and a 37% increase in total applications compared to the same period last year. Factors driving interest include the 2024 election, recent Supreme Court rulings, and the removal of the challenging "logic games" section from the LSAT. Experts told [Reuters](#) they expect law student numbers to ultimately increase by 10-15% by cycle's end, yet the law school pipeline remains strong with a 31% increase in November LSAT takers.

New Lawyer Hiring Still Showed Racial Disparities in 2023

Amidst a booming job market for new lawyer grads, there are still significant differences in hiring rates among graduates of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. While 84% of white graduates had secured employment that required a J.D., only about 73% of Black and Native American/Alaska Native graduates had been hired into similar jobs. While looking at the overall legal job market, white law grads had a 94% employment rate compared to 89% for Black graduates. [Reuters](#) breaks down the disparities and examines what they mean for the legal industry.

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